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THE UNITED STATES ANNOUNCES EVENTS MARKING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE

May 31, 2008, will mark the fifth anniversary of a new kind of international cooperative effort in the fight against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD): the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

Australia and the United States have been partners in this initiative since its inception. Ambassador Robert D. McCallum Jr. commended the partnership for its solid record of success over the past five years.

On the occasion of this anniversary, the U.S. Department of State is hosting a series of activities, including a meeting for policy-makers from all states that have endorsed the PSI, which will be held May 28, 2008, in Washington D.C. They will gather to review the PSI's results and successes over the last five years and look at ways to continue strengthening the Initiative for the future. On the following day, the United States will host a one-day PSI workshop at the same location to provide detailed information on the broad range of PSI activities for all states interested in learning more about the PSI. The PSI has made substantial contributions to strengthening the global commitment to stop proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery.

Beginning in 2003 with eleven states who came together to establish the principles underlying the PSI, there are now almost 90 nations worldwide who have endorsed these principles, and participate in interdiction exercises, sharing information, and promoting international cooperation in stopping transfers of items and materials of WMD proliferation concern.

The effectiveness of the PSI is based in large part on successfully preserving discretion regarding specific operational details, thus ensuring the security and efficacy of its interdiction activities.

The United States is pleased to have played an active role in the success of the PSI by leveraging related counterproliferation efforts across the U.S. government; by contributing naval, law enforcement, and other maritime security assets to interdiction exercises; by hosting PSI counterproliferation meetings, workshops, and exercises with other PSI-endorsing states; as well as by working with specific partner states to improve their capacity for combating the proliferation of WMD.

Rogue states, terrorist and criminal organizations, and unscrupulous individuals who contemplate trafficking in WMD-related items must now contend with an international community united in detecting and interdicting such transfers whether by air, land, or sea.

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